

teriology. These I feel should have been presented in a different order, with antimicrobial agents following bacteriology, and an attempt should have been made to highlight the clinical importance of these sections with, for example, therapeutics and basic pharmacology being blended to show their relevance in the management of urinary tract infections.

Other chapters cover such topics as urinary tract infections and urethral syndrome in women, bacterial and non-bacterial prostatitis in men, as well as urinary tract infection in childhood, the elderly, pregnancy and diabetes. Some sections such as those on infected renal calculi and genitourinary tuberculosis have little relevance to the daily practice of genitourinary medicine in the UK and the sections on sexually transmitted diseases although adequately covered were fairly uninspiring.

At times I felt the data presented were inaccurate such as "about 15% of men with gonococcal urethritis will develop urethral stricture disease" (accompanied by a 1965 reference!), and "approximately 40% of men with acute urethritis have gonococcal infections" (certainly not in Leicester in 1989 and I guess not in many parts of the USA even when the naval boat comes in!). These anachronisms together with a few factual errors made me feel uneasy about some of the less familiar information presented. Nevertheless, I feel this is a useful book either to dip into or for those genitourinary physicians with an interest in "cystitis", but I am relieved my copy of the book was complimentary because I would certainly have browsed through its competitors before parting with my money.

PETER FISK

**Acyclovir therapy for herpesvirus infections** Edited by DA Baker (\$119.50. Pp 344). New York. Marcel Dekker. (ISBN 0-8247-8091-4) 1990.

The 24 contributors to this book who are all from the United States, write well in clear English and fortunately the problem of widely differing literary styles which can be obtrusive in multi author volumes does not arise here in any way, making the text very readable.

The first chapters are devoted to detailed accounts of the molecular basis for acyclovir's antiviral activity and then to the many carefully performed preclinical and clinical safety studies so essential in the evaluation of any new drug. The general safety of the drug is confirmed though more information is required concerning its use in pregnancy and for long term suppression.

The management of HSV infections of the eye, mouth and hand are separately dealt with in very practical detail. The chapter on hand infections stresses the problems often met with in virus isolation from this site, skin puncture generally being required to achieve success. The not uncommon and often troublesome association of hand infections with lymphoedema of hand or arm presumably resulting from lymphatic damage is discussed along with the value of suppressive therapy in health care workers. (The risks of infection to others here are highlighted by the case of a dental hygienist with herpes of the hand who infected 20 of 46 patients seen over a 4 day period.)

The management of genital herpes is covered in two chapters which include good brief accounts of the virology, epidemiology, and clinical course of the illness. Diagnosis and prevention are not forgotten whilst the recommended treatment are clearly explained and do not stop at the prescription of acyclovir.

No one has so far been able to offer a treatment which will completely prevent recurrent disease and the whole question of suppressive therapy with acyclovir in this situation is examined in considerable detail with common sense recommendations.

The difficult and complex questions posed by herpes in pregnancy and herpetic illness in the neonate and infancy occupy nearly a third of the book and this section deserves to be widely read. It will be of especial interest to obstetricians and pediatricians.

The use of acyclovir in the treatment of encephalitis, in HIV infection and immunosuppression in general, and its use in zoster, varicella, and EB virus infection are all carefully and critically considered.

The book is well bound and printed (though an episode of "double vision" experienced by the reviewer turned out to be due to the visibility of the

print from the other side of a very thin page; only two pages were so affected). The text throughout is well referenced and there is a good index. It should be read by anyone who treats patients with the disease. The price will probably ensure that most of us will have to read it in the library.

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## NOTICE

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### International Pathogenic Neisseria Conference

The Seventh International Pathogenic Neisseria Conference will be held on 9-14 September 1990 in West Berlin, Federal Republic of Germany. For further details please contact Dr. Mark Achtman, Max-Planck-Institut für molekulare Genetik, Ihnestr. 73, 1000 Berlin 33, Federal Republic of Germany. Tel: (004930) 8307 262, telefax: (004930) 8307 382.